

Memo, Walter Bedell Smith to Harry S. Truman accompanied by a memorandum, February 19, 1951. President's Secretary's File, Truman Papers.



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

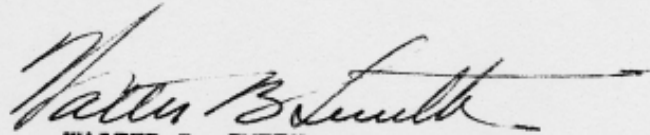
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

19 February 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Attached are comments on the interview which Stalin recently gave to Pravda. You may be interested in our analysis of this interview.

  
WALTER B. SMITH  
Director

Attachments

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C. I. A. LETTER 10-24-A3  
82-6  
BY HLT 1-31-54

19 February 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Stalin's Pravda Interview

I. The language of Stalin's recent statement, although moderate in comparison with Soviet propaganda, is stronger than his previous pronouncements on foreign affairs, particularly in its denunciation of Attlee and the US. Although it contains little in the way of threats, it can hardly be considered as conciliatory. It provides no reliable clue to any change in Soviet policy or to any prospective Soviet move.

II. The statement may possibly have been designed in part to convince the people of the USSR that the Soviet Government has been, and will continue to be devoted to a policy of peace, but that unless the peoples of the Western World curb their warmongering governments, war "may become inevitable." It therefore adds the weight of Stalin's name to the recent trend of Soviet propaganda which has warned that the "forces of peace" may not succeed, as had been previously predicted, in preventing the "warmongers" from starting a third World War.

III. We believe it more likely that the statement was directed primarily at foreign audiences and represents part of a concerted effort, through the "peace campaign", to arouse the peoples of the NATO countries against the rearmament programs of their governments and to alienate the neutral and the wavering powers from the US. In its timing, this statement, on the one hand,


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reflects a reaction to US rearmament, the acceleration of the NATO program, Eisenhower's trip to Europe, and the discussions on German and Japanese rearmament; on the other, it provides the key note for the "World Peace Council" which is about to meet in East Berlin and which the USSR will presumably use as a medium for an intensification of the "peace campaign" against "economically disastrous" Western rearmament.

IV. We are unable to estimate the significance of the elaborate attack on Attlee. Stalin's statement may have been designed (a) to encourage British pacifists and left wing elements to oppose the rearmament program; (b) to provoke a general election that would for some time hamper British action in the development of the NATO program; (c) to replace Attlee with Churchill on the theory (1) that left wing Labor elements, if in opposition, would serve Soviet purposes more effectively; (2) that a Churchill government would be a better target for accusations of warmongering than a Labor Government, or (3) that Churchill might exercise a greater influence than Attlee over the US Government and might press his recent suggestion for direct talks with Stalin. None of these hypotheses is wholly convincing.

V. Stalin's attack on the United Nations as an "instrument of war" under US control may be designed to prepare the way for a Soviet withdrawal from that organization. The Warsaw Peace Congress in November 1950 established a "World Peace Council"

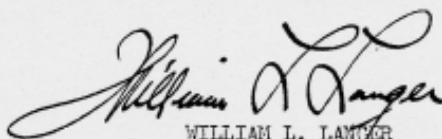


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which Communist propaganda has promoted as a "conscience" for the UN to see that the latter fulfills properly its obligations. Although Stalin's statement does not refer to the "World Peace Council" specifically, the possibility that the Council is being readied as a Communist alternative to the UN has long been recognized. However, the UN would still appear to have value to the USSR as a propaganda platform and as a means of obstructing Western action, and a Soviet break with the UN does not appear imminent.

VI. We do not believe that Stalin's statement that final US and British rejection of the Chinese Communist proposals "can only end in a defeat of the interventionists" foreshadows Soviet intervention in the Korean war. It was probably designed, in part, as a gesture to encourage the Chinese Communists, and, in part, as a reiteration of the Soviet thesis of the inevitability of capitalist defeat because the "peoples" (American and British soldiers in Korea) will not fight for an "unjust cause" (aggression).

VII. In general, we believe that Stalin's statement reflects grave apprehension concerning the rearmament of the US and Western Europe and represents a determined effort to mobilize popular opposition to rearmament. The statement provides no clear indication of Soviet intention to resort to military action but emphasizes that failure of the "peace campaign" may make war inevitable."



WILLIAM L. LANGER  
Assistant Director  
National Estimates



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